

Department Contacts:

Contact your
Agency Travel Coordinator (ATC)
for travel policies and procedures specific
to your agency

ATC: _____

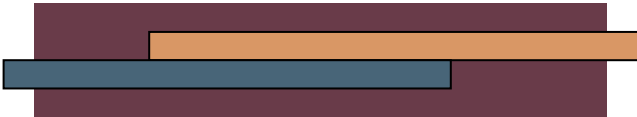
E-mail: _____

Phone: _____



United States Department of Agriculture
Departmental Management
Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Financial Policy and Planning
Credit, Travel, & Grants Policy Division
(CTGPD)
Washington, D.C. 20250

TRAVEL INFORMATION



Travel
Information
for New
Employees

Welcome to USDA

Traveler's Responsibilities

There are four fundamentals you need
to know about Federal travel:

1. Travel must be conducted in the most cost effective & efficient manner and only when necessary to accomplish the mission of the Government.
2. Employees traveling on official business are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business.
3. Except in emergencies, travel must be authorized in GovTrip or in writing, *in advance*, by an official at least one level above the traveler.
4. Use of the Government sponsored, contract-issued charge card is mandatory for all official travel related charges, unless there has been an exemption granted for non-use of the card.



Management officials are delegated
authorities under this manual and are
required to timely report any violations
of these regulations to the Chief
Financial Officer.

Personal & Mixed Official Travel

- Booking personal travel using the Department's official travel system is **prohibited**
- Mixing business and personal travel requires written approval by the delegated approving official
- The official travel segment should be booked using the Department's official travel system
- Modifications for official travel arrangements should be made outside of the official Department travel system – For example, the traveler may contact their TMC's public reservation number (the traveler is responsible for all risks related to deviating from the official travel authorization)
- Government fares may not be used for personal travel
- Per Diem will not be paid for personal days taken in conjunction with official travel
- Government rental cars may not be used for personal travel
- Government charge cards may only be used for official business travel expenses
- Any fees and costs resulting from personal travel must be paid by the traveler and are not reimbursable
- Any additional costs including change fees, will not be paid by the Department
- Any other additional costs for personal travel due to the official travel being canceled will not be paid by the Department
- Any cost savings resulting from modified travel, such as exchanged tickets, must be reflected on the travel voucher and returned to the Government

**Important Travel Regulations:
Federal Travel Regulations (FTR)
General Services Administration
(GSA) www.gsa.gov**

FTR is contained in 41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) chapters 300 – 304

Agriculture Travel Regulations (ATR)
www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DM2300-001.htm

The ATR applies to travel of USDA employees and to travel of individuals either employed intermittently by the Department or not employed, but carrying out official activities of the Department.



GovTrip is the official travel system for USDA. To begin using GovTrip, a profile must be set up in the system. Contact your agency [Federal Agency Travel Administrator \(FATA\)](#) for assistance in getting a GovTrip profile.
www.govtrip.com

- Q:** In what situations can I make travel arrangements outside of GovTrip?
- A:** According to the FTR, you **must** use the Department’s established E-Gov Travel Service unless your travel meets one of the three below situations:
1. Such use would result in an unreasonable burden on mission accomplishment
 2. Such use would compromise a national security interest; or
 3. Such use might endanger your life

Please refer to the FTR 301-13 for more information about these situations.

Before You Travel

1. **Determine your travel purpose or objective** (i.e. Site Visit, Informational meeting, Training or Conference Attendance, or Relocation)
2. **Obtain supervisory approval prior to planning your trip**
3. **Do you need a travel card?**

To participate in the USDA travel card program you will need to travel [two or more](#) times per year.

Sign-up for the travel card program [14 business](#) days prior to travel commencement. You can obtain a travel card application from your Agency Travel Coordinator (ATC).

You must use the Government travel card in accordance with established Federal and Department rules and regulations.

Visit www.usda.gov/procurement/ccsc/travel_card.htm for more information on USDA travel card regulations.

Refer to the “*USDA Travel Card Do’s & Don’ts*” as a quick reference for travel card regulations.

4. **Plan itineraries & transportation modes** (Determine travel duration, estimate lodging, transportation, and subsistence costs)

Visit www.gsa.gov for current per diem rates relating to your destination. The link to Per Diem rates is on the left side under “Most Requested Links”.

5. **Work with your ATC to establish a profile in GovTrip**
6. **Prepare your travel authorization in GovTrip (www.GovTrip.com)**

Filing a Travel Voucher (Claim)

1. **Gather all trip receipts** (Airline, lodging, car rental, & miscellaneous travel receipts [over \\$75.00](#))
2. **Enter a travel voucher in GovTrip; travel vouchers must be submitted within 5 business days after completion of the trip.** For those on continuous travel, travelers are encouraged to file a voucher every 14 days.
3. **If you are a government travel card holder, pay your travel card bill and retain travel records & receipts for audit purposes. Travel documents should be maintained for 6 years and 3 months.**

Remember - You are responsible for paying your travel bill timely. Do not wait for your travel reimbursement to make payment to the bank!

- Q:** What Expenditures are Considered Official Travel and Reimbursable?
- A:** Reimbursable expenditures include (but are not limited to):
- Transportation (airline, train, or local transit fares)
 - Meals & Lodging (a.k.a. per diem)
 - Miscellaneous Expenses (such as baggage expenses, lodging taxes, & laundry)
 - Taxi or Shuttle Fares (including tips)
 - Rental Cars
 - Mileage allowances for privately owned vehicles, parking, and tolls

- Q:** For what travel expenses am I responsible?
- A:** You are responsible for expenses over the reimbursement limits established in the FTR. Your agency will not pay for excess costs resulting from circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations or services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business.

- Q:** Can I ever purchase a non-refundable fare?
- A:** Government Contract Fares are the USDA preference as they protect the Government and/or traveler from penalties associated with changes in travel. Travelers may purchase non-refundable tickets if their agency has received an annual waiver from OCFO. Additionally, agencies should establish internal controls that address the following:
- Use
 - Authorization
 - Cost-benefit analysis
 - Disposal of unused tickets; and
 - Consequences

Please refer to the ATR for more detailed information.

Premium Class Travel Authorizations
Coach class travel is the USDA preference, however, authorization can be requested for the use of premium class travel.

General Officers may authorize premium class travel for their employees and OCFO will authorize premium class travel for General Officers. Please refer to the ATR for personnel definitions (such as General Officer).

Agencies are required to report on a quarterly basis all instances of approved use of premium class travel to the OCFO.

Justifications of Premium Class Travel

- Flight only has premium class travel (business class only)
- No space available in coach (first or business class)
- Medical accommodation (first or business class)
- Security (first or business class)
- Cost savings (business class only)
- 14-hour rule (business class only)
- Exceptional circumstances (first or business class)

For more information regarding premium class travel regulations, refer to the ATR.

Actual Subsistence Expenses

Authorization for actual expenses should be made in as much advance of travel as possible. Actual expenses can be made after travel is completed when one of the following has occurred: Emergency situations in which requests for prior travel authorization were not possible; or unanticipated, unusual, and exceptional circumstances resulted in the incurrence of actual and necessary subsistence expenses that were much greater than the authorized per diem allowance. Agency Heads are authorized to approve requests for increases to actual subsistence reimbursements up to 150% of the established rate. Subsistence reimbursements from 150% - 300% must be sent to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) for review and approval (with the exception of OIG).